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ABSTRACT

In order to give students an opportunity to personalize their learning through writing, two teachers of a high school American civilization class designed a biographical scrapbook project. The project objectives were to have students read about one person significant in the development of United States history and literature of the Revolutionary era, to collect specific information necessary to a biographical understanding of that person, to recognize and summarize the contributions of that person to United States history and literature, to convey information through various methods within a scrapbook format, to write both creative and expository articles, and to compile a bibliography. The following types of scrapbook entries had to be included: a birth certificate; diary entries or letters; newspaper articles; sermons, speeches, or essays on a specific topic; an obituary and epitaph; a time-line; a Who's Who entry; and a lead to a speech introducing the historical figure. An interview with one of the students revealed that the student had to think like the character in order to write like him. The student also wrote the least complex entries first. For other entries, the student had to imagine herself in a different time and place and assume the roles of authors different from herself. Clearly, writing history rather than writing about history can help students learn about both writing and history. (HOD)

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Role Writing to Understand the Past

by

Bernadette M. Glaze

Mrs. Glaze: What do you think you learned from doing this project?
Kristen: Well, I learned a lot. I think more than I would have if I had just gone out and written a paper about him because the entries we had to do forced me to look at not only events that happened in his life, but made me reflect back on the way he probably went about them or about his life in general or his philosophies as well as just the facts. So it made me get into trying to think like he would think which made me learn more than just writing down facts.

This is the assessment of 16 year old Kristen, a junior at Lake Braddock Secondary, of a project she had completed in my American Civilization class last December. We called the project, "Heroes of the Revolution: A Biographical Scrapbook." Kristen and the other students in my class had been keeping journals in history since September. Students wrote in their journals both to introduce new concepts and ideas in history and to use new information in a variety of ways. The journals were meant to enliven writing in history. Writing expressively in their journals enabled students to make history more meaningful by making history more personal. Students internalized the concepts of the past through writing.

Both the Journal and the Biographical Scrapbook assignments were based on three assumptions. First, writing is learning. It is not simply an end product of the learning process. Students write to learn as well as learn to write. Writing helps students make connections between what they know and what they do not know. This process is the essence of learning. Second, students need "a range of writing purposes (linked to a range of audience) so that pupils are given more opportunity to express their thoughts in a variety of ways--expressive, transactional and poetic." (Martin, et. al., 1976.) The last assumption is that truly valuable learning occurs when students personalize information. One way to personalize information is to convey it through expressive and poetic writings.

My partner, Orlean Anderson, and I had both been influenced by James Britton's function categories (Britton, 1975) as a way of understanding the development of writing abilities and were consciously looking for ways to integrate expressive and poetic writing into our American Civilization curriculum. We designed the Biographical Scrapbook activity to give students an opportunity to express their learning in writing that was other than transactional. Also, we knew from the interest and excitement generated by a simulation of the Constitutional Convention that students enjoy and learn a great deal from role play. This is the assignment sheet that we gave our students.

CS 207 713

Project: HEROES OF THE REVOLUTION -- A BIOGRAPHICAL SCRAPBOOK

Objectives:

to read about one person significant in the development of the American history and literature of the Revolutionary era
to collect specific information necessary to a biographical understanding of your person
to recognize and summarize the contributions of that person to American history and literature
to convey information through various methods within a scrapbook format
to write both creative and expository articles
to compile a bibliography

Procedure:

1. Select a person from the list below. If there is a person whom you would like to research who is not on the list, ask Mrs. Anderson or Mrs. Glaze for help. You want to make sure that there is sufficient information available in the library to help you understand the figure you choose.
2. Begin reading about your person.
3. Take notes as you read.
4. Use various sources such as general references, biographies and encyclopedia articles.
5. Keep a bibliographical list as you read.
6. Transform notes into a variety of scrapbook entries.
   a. Your scrapbook should contain
      1. A title page
      2. An introductory page
      3. Required entries portraying specific information on your person
   b. The following types of scrapbook entries MUST be included:
      1. A <u>birth certificate</u>
      2. <u>Diary entries or letters</u> revealing information about the person's youth
      3. <u>Newspaper articles</u> reporting and explaining significant events in which your subject was involved.
      4. <u>Sermon, speech or essay or the topic</u>: ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN WHO WISH TO SUCCEED IN AMERICA
      5. <u>Obituary</u>
      6. <u>Epitaph</u> -- this entry is the saying or verse that that the person would like to have on his own gravestone
      7. <u>Time-line</u> -- a chronological depiction of important events in the person's life
      8. <u>Who's Who</u> -- an entry included in a reference book identifying the person as a V.I.P.
      9. <u>A lead to a speech introducing</u> this historical figure to the modern-day British Parliament. Assume that you will be delivering the speech and that the time is now.

Suggested People:

John Adams	Thomas Paine	James Madison	Roger Sherman
Sam Adams	Patrick Henry	John Marshall	Robert Livingston
Thomas Jefferson	George Mason	Ethan Allen	Gen. Kosciusko
George Washington	Richard Henry Lee	Aaron Burr	Gen. Lafayette

John Hancock	Ben Franklin	Benedict Arnold	John Paul Jones
James Otis	Alexander Hamilton	Crispus Attucks	Abigail Adams
John Dickinson			

Each entry focused on a particular period of the historical figure's life. The students role played in writing. They wrote as 18th century reporters for the Newspaper entry and the Obituary and as heroes of the Revolution for the Diary, Epitaph and Sermon. The Scrapbooks were lively, detailed and interesting compared with the flat, general, boring reports I was used to reading. Students enjoyed role writing the Scrapbooks as they had enjoyed role playing in the Constitutional Convention. I decided to research the Scrapbook to understand what happens when students role write in history.

At the beginning of my research, my data included the completed Scrapbooks, process logs the students kept while they researched and wrote, my own class log and interviews with three students.

I was in the middle of reading the student process logs when I interviewed Kristen. I was impressed with her ability to reflect on her writing and with the fact that she writes poetry on her own. Kristen is an open, friendly girl with a variety of interests, including art, drama and psychology. She was at ease throughout the interview and talked openly, freely, and enthusiastically about writing the Scrapbook. At the end of a follow-up interview, Kristen said that her experience with writing journals had helped her write the Scrapbook. She learned journal writing this year in my class and in her psychology class where she heard a presentation by Anne Wotring on think-writing (Wotring, 1981).

> Kristen: She /Anne Wotring/ came in and talked to us about it /think writing/ and how it helps you think and sometimes I just do it if I'm really mad or something. I just sit down or mainly when I write poetry or something like that, when I'm really having strong feelings about something, or if I'm mad I will just sit down and it will come out on paper and it's always easier to see it there in front of you.
>
> Mrs. Glaze: And in the whole process, where did you learn how to reflect on things and say like, you were doing this, all right this happened and then you step back and kind of reflect on why. When did you start doing that?
>
> Kristen: Well, I have always done that, you know, since as long as I can remember in thinking, you know, like usually it's right before I go to bed. I'll just think back and usually something happened during the day that maybe one of those type deals where you look at a situation and you go, 'well, I should have done this' or 'I should have done that' or you think of a bad situation and you can't figure out why you did something or you can't figure out why your friend did something and I always go to bed like mad or not understanding. But then it was IBS class (Introduction to Behaviorial Sciences) and just this class and when we did that period now of what are you thinking now, that's when you can see what you are thinking. It's different when you can see right there on paper what you are thinking.
>
> Mrs. Glaze: Do you think the kind of journal writing that we

were doing helps you with these kinds of assignments?

Kristen: Oh, yeah, the journals that I have to write in this class and also in IBS.

Kristen had developed skills as a journal writer which influenced her writing the Scrapbook. After interviewing Kristen, I narrowed the focus of my research to two interviews with Kristen and my question to what happens when a journal writer role-writes in history.

I asked Kristen to tell the story of researching and writing the Scrapbook. Her story came as a surprise to me. Kristen wrote the last entries on the assignment sheet first. The more we talked, the more I realized the importance of the order in wich she wrote the entries. I have included a brief discussion of Kristen's research as well as the story of how she wrote each entry in the order she chose.

Researching and Taking Notes

Kristen described researching and taking notes on Benedict Arnold, the subject she chose for the Scrapbook. I asked Kristen if the kind of entries she was going to write influenced the kinds of sources she looked for.

Kristen: Well, I looked for the journal entries that were supposed to be about his younger life. That was the main part I had trouble researching because most of them didn't deal with his early parts of life. Most of them dealt with his older parts, and so it did influence my research. I saw what I had to get and then went out and researched for it and made sure. I basically got an overload of information and came home and sorted it out as to which book. I marked the places in the books and stuff, and I marked like what it had to deal with. I marked in each book. I might have just taken a piece of paper and written down Early Life and marked it in each place in the book. So I had all of it basically all my research done. I did it basically all at first and then I had it all there and I had it all organized to which part of his life and which entry I could use this for.

Not only the gathering of material, but also the notetaking was influenced by the kind of writing she was going to do.

Kristen: I did take notes as to like which entry. I took notes on certain entries like say his speech to young Americans. Like his morals and stuff like that I would read through and take notes on. May be something he said. Like there was a big controversy as to why he became a traitor. Some people said it was because of pride and he said it was because he didn't like America's relations with France. He said that's the reason why he said he did it. But everyone thought because all of these other people were getting promoted and he was Brigadier General and he was still other people had gotten before him who were younger than him. That's supposedly is what they thought made him become a traitor.

Kristen figured out what kind of information she would need to write each entry and "researched for it." She found that her information had to be researched from two perspectives: which part of Arnold's life did it fit and which entry could it fill. The Scrapbook entries served as an outline or way to organize the material on Benedict Arnold's life. After organizing the material, Kristen began to write. First, she wrote the Who's Who, the Time Line and the Birth Certificate.

Who's Who, Time Line, Birth Certificate

Kristen: Well, I started out with the Who's Who and the Time Line and stuff about the fact that was life, before I started talking about the Journal entries and stuff.

Mrs. Glaze: How come you did that? How come you started out with the Who's Who? And when you say the facts beside the Who's Who entry, what other did you start with?

Kristen: The Time Line and the...and I believe the Birth Certificate. I started with those because I didn't want to get into the journal writing until last, until I knew more about him, because I didn't know anything really about him to start with except Benedict Arnold was a traitor. That's all I knew and I didn't know why and so I had to figure out why he did it before I could figure out his way of thinking.

Kristen did not start with the first entry on the assignment sheet, the Diary or Journal because she felt that she had to "figure out his way of thinking," before she wrote it. She used the Time Line and Who's Who to help her see the events of Benedict Arnold's life. She wrote the facts down in these two entries in order to feel like she knew him.

She first had to see the events of his life before she could begin to interpret them. Kristen decided in the beginning that some of the entries would require her to try to think the way Benedict Arnold would.

Kristen: Who's Who, doing that first helped me because I could see the events in his life and then the Time Line put them in chronological order and I could see in front of me the facts and everything. And then most of the other ones took a great deal of thinking of seeing the way he acted in his life and trying to think the way he did like the journal entries and stuff like that. Speeches he would make and a lot of that would require a whole bunch of research requires a lot of thinking about how that person would.

Obituary and Epitaph

Mrs. Glaze: What about writing the obituary and epitaph? What was your experience with them?

Kristen: A lot of gloom. He didn't lead a really good life so his epitaph. I never did read his real one so I had no idea what it was like. Like Amy let me read Benjamin Franklin's and his was bizarre. So I basically reflected on...If someone asked me to write an epitaph. I really don't know how I would

do it. I guess I would look back on my life and think about something I did wrong and something I did right and just let people know that. I think I said in the epitaph is to learn from your mistakes but don't let them destroy you.

Mrs. Glaze: I remember that. I thought that was really neat because it seemed like you were really trying to get into what he would say if you were going to write one. Specially if you were a man who made so many mistakes.

Kristen: It was much easier for a lot of the other people because they did a hero or someone like that. It was hard for me to do a person who is a bad guy or traitor.

Mrs. Glaze: Why do you think it was harder?

Kristen: Because it is easier to tell people what to do than it is to tell people not to do this. 'Don't do this' or 'don't let this happen to you.' It is easier to tell someone something good.

Mrs. Glaze: So you made the decision that Benedict Arnold would probably regret?

Kristen: Regret a lot of his life as opposed to being proud of it.

Mrs. Glaze: Was that your own decision or did you read that some place?

Kristen: That was my own decision. That was because the information that I could see, I would form it by putting myself in his shoes. If you looked back over life you would not be very happy about it and would not have a really good attitude about it in general.

Kristen decided that an epitaph would require "looking back on my life and thinking about something I did wrong and something I did right and just let people know that." Benedict Arnold's reputation as a traitor posed a problem for Kristen because "It is easier to tell people what to do than it is to tell people what not to do." Kristen put herself in Benedict Arnold's shoes and decided that he would regret his life. Kristen was personalizing the events of his life by saying, "How would I feel about the events of my life if I were Benedict Arnold?" This personal involvement with the facts of his life enabled her to internalize what started out as a Who's Who, a Time Line and a Birth Certificate.

Newspaper Articles

Kristen used the Who's Who and Time Line for the information she needed to write the Newspaper entry.

Kristen: By that point, those were one of the last three things I did. I really didn't look back at my notes that much. I mainly looked at my Who's Who entry and my Time Line. I did those first and had at least one rough draft of those already. So when I went back I went back to my Time Line or went back to some of the other entries as well as my notes because

they are a bit more organized than my notes. The Time Line was laid out right there so I could see it. Many times I went back to that instead of going back to my notes. I had pretty much in my research regarding everything at that point. I had most of my research with it all planned in my mind for writing and how it went at that period because that was one of the last things I wrote. So that didn't take a whole lot of research at that time.

She based the Newspaper entry on what she felt would have been the biggest event of his life. The headline of her Newspaper entry reads: Arnold Turns Traitor. Kristen's main concern was organizing her information and writing the entry in a journalistic style.

Kristen: It was basically getting my information into some order. I had enough information to write it but putting into words, catchy words to catch someone's eye like the headlines and stuff. They first sentence should really get your attention. It was getting it into some order thatwould sound good and flow. I had all the information. I even had peoples' reactions and rebellions and stuff like that. I was just to try to get the information into some order that would flow.

Kirsten: I made it sound more personal and like eye witness accounts. I think I tried to put in someone actually asking someone else on the street, in the rebellion what they thought of Benedict Arnold. When I read over it, it really didn't sound like a newspaper article as much because there weren't any entries that actually asked....So I had all the facts the first time and I read over it and put in maybe not real quotes but maybe a direct quote that Benedict Arnold said or someone on the street would say.

Kristen used the previous entries as notes and as a way of organizing the information. Kristen was also developing a point of view or perspective on Benedict Arnold that helped her begin to think like him. In the Newspaper entry, as in the Epitaph, Kristen's process included putting herself in a different time and place. She commented, "I tried to focus on what those people might have said at that time...I tried to reflect. It didn't take a lot of research, but it did take a lot of thinking on how they would react in that situation."

Writing the Diary Entries

Kristen referred to the Diary entry both as a Diary entry and as a Journal entry. She wrote the Diary/Journal entry toward the end of the project because she felt she had to know as much about Benedict Arnold as possible to write the Diary. Her experience writing expressively in a journal influenced the process she used to write the Diary/Journal.

Kristen: I was thinking mainly how we write in class because it was a diary. So that is basically how I let my mind wander. He was writing that just for himself so no one else could see it.

Kristen wrote expressively in the role of Benedict Arnold. From experi-

ence, Kristen knew that expressive writing is like written down speech and reflects the thoughts and feelings of the writer. In order to write expressively as Benedict Arnold, she had to try to think like Benedict Arnold.

> Kristen: I didn't want to get into the journal writing until I knew more about him because I didn't know anything really about him to start with except Benedict Arnold was a traitor. That's all I knew, and I didn't know why. So I had to figure out why he did it, before I could figure out his way of thinking.

The assignment required that the Diary entry be based on Benedict Arnold's youth, and Kristen's first concern was the little information she had about his youth. She discovered that Benedict Arnold apprenticed in a pharmacy when he was 12 or 13 and that he ran off to fight in the French and Indian War when he was 14. These facts became the foundation of her Diary entry. She commented, "That was all I knew about him at that age, so I just connected them."

Kristen brainstormed facts she wanted to include in the Diary and then filled in words and details "to make it more like a story." Kristen's own work experience in a drug store provided her with details she used to revise for "believability."

> Kristen: I wanted it to sound like it actually did happen, not as if I was just sitting here trying to think back on what may have happened. I was actually trying to put myself in his shoes because I worked in a drug store. Back then, I'm sure it was easier to get somewhere in working in a drug store.

To make the Diary "believable" Kristen tried to write "more like a story." She didn't want it to sound like she was pretending to make it up. Writing a story was more real or believable than just pretending. Kristen used what she knew about Benedict Arnold as the foundation. She built the Diary entry with details from her own experience. To make the Diary entry sound real, Kristen put herself into a "frame of mind" like Benedict Arnold's to write expressively as Benedict Arnold.

> Kristen: I got back into my mind like what he was doing during that period...I had to remember how his life was going, so I could try thinking like he would think. In other words, when I went back over my notes, it wasn't really to add information. It was getting myself in that frame of mind.

How Kristen got into "that frame of mind" is illustrated by the structure of the Diary entry. Kristen wrote four entries for the Diary. She decided that Benedict Arnold's running away to war was the main topic she wanted to work with. She didn't want to write about the journey because she knew nothing about it. But Kristen knew about working in a drug store.

> Kristen: Because if he ran away to war. I tried to figure out why would someone do that. I started to think well pressure must of been building in him whether it be from family or from his job. I so tried to build that in there that he was real excited about working back in the pharmacy and working as an apprentice. Well, I thought since he's learning how to manage the books then he's getting more and more responsibility put

on him with managing the books and working back in the pharmacy. The pressure was probably just piling up on him. In the last entry I think I said he overheard some people talking about there being a French-Indian War. I don't know if I actually said that he ran away. I think I said, "I really want to go but I have to run away and be on my own." I didn't say well tomorrow I'm going to run away. I just kind of touched on the fact that he was thinking about it. How exciting war would be but he's too young. If he wanted to go the only way would be to run away. In a way that was immature. He was too young.

Kristen said that at one point she was aware of "fading out of facts" as she wrote the Diary.

Kristen: To a certain point, I had my facts and then to a certain point, I had to use my imagination to try to make it sound realistic, as if I were talking like Benedict Arnold. I had to make it sound believable. I didn't know that he had said, maybe a phrase. But putting myself into his shoes, I pretended, using the facts that I knew, that I was him when I was writing.

I knew that he worked in a drug store and I knew that he was an apprentice, but I didn't know that he worked long hours, and I didn't know that he must have gotten a shipment in on this day. I just used my imagination to make the situation more realistic based on fact. So it was based on fact. At first I was starting to write, I was kind of afraid that I wasn't telling the truth, or that I was fading away from the facts. But once I just let myself do that, then it sounded more realistic.

"Fading out of facts" enabled Kristen to write expressively as Benedict Arnold. Once she stopped worrying about "fading out of facts" Kristen was able to write expressively and to make the Diary realistic. If she wrote expressively, the Diary would sound like a Diary, not like someone was pretending to write a Diary. To Kristen, the Diary entry was more than a listing of facts. The Diary was to reflect feelings and concerns that, given her limited information, only her imagination could provide. She used her imagination to get into "the frame of mind" of Benedict Arnold and to provide the details that would make the Diary entry authentic.

Kristen: So I put in little situations that I might write about myself in the course of a day that he would probably write about. So I just stuck in little things--like a shipment coming into the drug store or somebody walking in--that I don't know that actually happened. I put them in there to make them sound believable.

Kristen integrated and personalized the information about Benedict Arnold through creating the Diary entry. She internalized the information through the imaginative leap that was necessary to make the Diary entry authentic. The Diary entry was based primarily on two events from Arnold's youth. Kristen's experience in writing the previous Scrapbook entries helped her interpret what kind of a person he might have been and how he might have thought.

Kristen: The Diary entry was to me the one I did last so that I would kind of, mainly putting it off and also knowing

more about the person as I researched him through the other things. But it was kind of funny because I just put it off because I thought it was the hardest thing to do at home. How am I going to do that? But once I just kind of brain-stormed out the facts I had, it was kind of easy just to, once I started writing it just came out and it sounded pretty believable.

Speech

Another entry for which Kristen had to assume the role of Benedict Arnold was the Speech 'Giving Advice to Young Men' on how to succeed in America. Kristen had a hard time writing this entry because Arnold was a traitor.

> Kristen: He was a loser. How does he give advice to somebody, like "don't do this." I guess, "don't let this happen to you."

So Kristen had to figure out what advice "a loser" would give to young men. Also, she couldn't actually research what he said.

> Kristen: Because a lot of it wasn't research it was research to find what kind of person he was but a lot of it was just imagination using your imagination. No one actually said this is the way he thought. You had to see the way he dealt with his life and try to put them to your mind and try to think how he would talk to somebody and what he would say to these people. Because he wasn't one to point out this was what I did wrong, 'don't do this'. He wasn't one to say that; he was very proud and stuff.

Kristen had to interpret the facts of his life to figure out what advice Arnold would give and how he would give it. She decided that he was proud and wouldn't admit to wrongdoing. She made this judgment after reading what people said about Benedict Arnold at the time and what he himself said about what happened. Looking at both sides helped Kristen decide what kind of person he was.

> Kristen: I started to see his kind of outlook the way he kind of looked at things. He really didn't let everything bother him. Like he didn't let the fact that people were calling him traitor bother him. He was unhappy in his older years. I think he regretted. I think he was in Canada for the last part of his life. He was like just deserted almost. He had a lot of regret I think. I don't really know for a fact.

Kristen integrated the facts through judging and interpreting what the facts said about Benedict Arnold. In order to give advice for Benedict Arnold, she imagined what his outlook would be and what he would say to young men about succeeding in America. She interpreted his action in order to write.

Lead to a Speech Introducing Benedict Arnold
to the British Parliament

Kristen wrote the Lead to the Speech last. For this entry, she had a modern audience, the British Parliament. In writing the lead, Kristen had to decide a slant or point of view on Benedict Arnold. The Lead includes her judgment on why Benedict Arnold is unique or what he would have to say

to the British Parliament of the 1980's. Kristen saw Arnold's being a spy in the American Revolution put him in an awkward position.

> Kristen: It was hard because it was trying to say something. Most of the time you usually say something good about someone but specially with his connections with the British. It was weird. Him being involved with America and then him still having like when he was involved with the Americans he evidently had connections with the British then I guess that was why he got caught was in the communications between the two. So I guess at that point I was trying to bring out even though he was involved with America he was still loyal to Britain. That was the point I tried to bring up. I tried to bring up some point that he was somewhat loyal to them.

The main influence on this writing was the audience as the British Parliament. Kristen said, "...it would be different if it were the Americans."

What happens when a journal writer role-writes in history? She tries to think like her character in order to write like him because she understands the relationship between writing and thinking. By learning how to write expressively in a journal, Kristen learned that writing is thinking and that understanding a new idea begins with relating it to yourself. The assignment worked well for Kristen because she was a journal writer and accustomed to relating the past to her own experience through writing. She was able to relate Benedict Arnold to herself and to think: what if Benedict Arnold wrote a diary, a sermon, an epitaph? How would an 18th century journalist report on his treason or write his obituary? When a journal writer role-writes in history, she learns more than "just writing down facts." She reflects on and interprets events in order to speculate about the beliefs, thoughts, feelings and motives of the historical character. Kristen was thinking much more as a historian than if she were doing a traditional report in history. She was learning history by role-writing.

Kristen's story of researching and writing the Scrapbook has helped me understand the complexity of the rhetorical demands of each entry. Kristen wrote the least complex entries first. The first three entries she wrote (the Birth Certificate, the Time Line, and the Who's Who) required little imagining of author or audience. For the other entries, Kristen imagined herself in a different time and place. She also assumed the roles of authors different from herself. For the Newspaper entry and the Obituary, Kristen became an 18th century reporter writing to Americans during the Revolutionary War. For the Speech Giving Advice to Young Men, Kristen assumed the role of Benedict Arnold writing to young men of 18th century America. For the Epitaph, Kristen once again assumed the role of Benedict Arnold, but this time her audience was broader. She had to think much more of what Benedict Arnold would write than about who would read the Epitaph.

The Diary entry presented special problems to Kristen. She once again assumed the role of Benedict Arnold, but this time she wrote for herself in her assumed role. She wrote expressively as another person. Since the presence of the author is heaviest in expressive writing, Kristen had to assume the role of Arnold as much as she could for the Diary entry. That

is why she had to leave this entry to one of the last. For the Lead to the speech, Kristen was herself in the present. But she needed to imagine how her audience, the British Parliament, would receive Benedict Arnold in order to write.

The Diary was the most sophisticated writing task in the Scrapbook. Kristen used the facts of Arnold's life as an outline to a story. She colored in the outline with details from her own experience. Kristen wrote a story to make the Diary sound real--to make it sound like someone was really writing, not pretending to write. She wrote historic fiction. Historic fiction is used in history classes to help students understand the past. Students read The Jungle to understand the effects of industrialization and The Crucible to understand the Puritans. Similarly, Kristen used role-writing to understand a hero of the Revolution.

Being sensitive to the complexities of the Scrapbook assignment will improve how I prepare my students for the project. I am wondering about the order of the entries on the assignment sheet. I think Kristen was right. The Who's Who and Time Line should probably be done first. I have also gained some insights into how to use the Scrapbooks as learning tools. Many of the Scrapbook entries are like primary sources, the basic tools of historians. Students could analyze and interpret each other's Scrapbooks as a followup activity. The activity would provide a live student audience. It would also increase the students' understanding of the function of primary sources in history.

Since I began this project, I have wondered about the writing done in most high school history classes. We ask students to write about history, but rarely ask them to write history. Historians don't write five paragraph essays on Jeffersonian Democracy or ten page research papers on causes of the Civil War. And, yet, this is the kind of writing we too often ask our history students to do. They write to us as teacher examiners about subjects historians spend years searching and writing about. Writing becomes a frustrating task for both student and teacher because it is not real. Kristen's Diary entry for the Scrapbook was more real than a five paragraph essay because she wrote real historic fiction by creating a story with the Diary.

Historians are writers. Their basic tools are primary sources, their imaginations and their love of their subject areas. An understanding of history requires an understanding of history writing. Our present approach to writing in high school history classes doesn't provide opportunities for students to be history writers. Writing history rather than about history would teach students about both writing and history.

Kristen's story of researching and writing her Scrapbook has taught me how much students have to say about their own writing and learning. Her story also confirms my belief in the value of journal writing in history. Students can learn history by relating new ideas to themselves through journal writing and by role-writing to understand the past.

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